



Community groups see bright future in new Studio

U.S. Airways isn't Tempe's only place to find first class upgrades. The Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA), scheduled for completion in 2006, will bring state-of-the-art enhancements to the community arts experience.

"It will be wonderful to be in a purpose-built theater that has the latest innovations and the wonderful ambience that a theater should have," Actors' Renaissance Theatre Artistic Director James Barnard said. "This should help to raise the technical quality of our productions tenfold."

Soon, Tempe Little Theatre (TLT), Childsplay, A Ludwig Dance Theatre, Actors' Renaissance Theatre and others will move from their home in the Tempe Performing Arts Center in downtown Tempe to TCA's Studio, a flexible, 200-seat theater with two levels of surrounding space for technical staging or audience seating.

"From a technical standpoint, the new studio will have better acoustics, more comfortable chairs and improved parking options," TLT Technical

Director Sharon Gonwa said. Features, such as multiple stage configurations, advanced lighting, sound and stage-management controls and flexibility in the suspension of scenic elements will provide art groups with more options when creating their artistic presentations.

"One of my favorite things about working in a black box theatre is the ability to tailor the entire room to the performance, including where the audience will sit," Childsplay Production Manager Anthony Runfola said. "The flooring in the (Studio) will be able to raise and lower with ease,

creating several different staging possibilities."

Loading scenery will be easier, as well, and the cat-walk system, lighting and sound equipment, control boards and adjustable stage and seating platforms all will improve the efficiency of installation.

As productions evolve, so

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will audiences, who arts groups want to cultivate as patrons, performers and volunteers.

"A real theater is prestigious . . . and (TCA) fills the bill," A Ludwig Dance Theatre Artistic Director Ann Ludwig said. "There is little doubt that the space will help in the promotion of each event."



Photo by Heather Hill

"Desert Dance Theatre is excited to finally have a home," Artistic Director-Company Manager Lisa R. Chow said.

That could translate to larger audiences.

"Performing to full houses is our biggest dream," TLT's Gonwa said.

The possibilities excite Barnard: "...with all of the other companies that will be housed there ... there will be a great synergy of creativity."

And Childsplay expects that synergy to spill beyond the TCA's walls.

"Our growth opportunities are rooted this beautiful new home on Tempe Town Lake.," Runfola said. "Our families will look to attending a performance and then spending the rest of the day enjoying the art park and Tempe Beach Park - an experience that will be unique to the TCA."

TCA studio user groups

A Ludwig Dance Theatre
www.aludwigdance.org/

Actors' Renaissance Theatre
www.actorsrenaissance.org/

Arizona Academy of the Performing Arts
www.arizonaacademy.org/

ASU Public Events
www.asugammage.com/home.shtml

Childsplay
www.childsplayaz.org/

Desert Dance Theatre
www.DesertDanceTheatre.org

Tempe Community Chorus
www.aztecfree.net/tcchorus/

Tempe Little Theatre
www.tempelittletheatre.org/